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ABSTRACT

This document summarizes the activities of a workshop addressing the establishment of the International Network of Schools of Library and Information Sciences (SLISNET). The report contains an introduction, a general discussion of the SLISNET project and the long-range planning picture, an overview of the process of examining resolution C/VII.15 and approving the project description, and deliberations on finding alternative funding sources. Also included are a directory of participants, a copy of the agenda, a list of resolutions, a SLISNET project description and action plan, a list of requirements for different levels of connectivity, and a sample SLISNET participation form. (BEW)

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WORKSHOP ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF SCHOOLS OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCES (SLISNET)

Pittsburgh

School of Library and Information Science

University of Pittsburgh

December 4-7, 1995

FINAL REPORT

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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Paris, December 1995

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REPORT

1. The meeting was opened by Dean Toni Carbo Bearman who welcomed participants. She expressed special pleasure in extending welcomes not only in her capacity as Dean of the School of Library and Information Science of the University of Pittsburgh, but also in her capacity of the incoming President-elect of Association of Library and Information Science Education (ALISE). Participants were also welcomed by Mr. Yves Courrier of the UNESCO Division of the General Information Programme (PGI) who introduced his colleague Ms. Delia Torrijos, PGI Regional Advisor for Asia and the Pacific, posted in Thailand. The list of participants is included as Appendix (1).

2. In presenting the background to the workshop, Mr. Courrier pointed out that the project of an international network of schools of library and information sciences appears now in the Programme and Budget for 1996/97. (28 C/5, para. 04222) approved by the General Conference of UNESCO at its 28th Session.

   He indicated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the SLISNET project description which had been previously circulated to participants. The paper offered a background for the proposed network and suggestions as to how it could operate - The project was conceived to facilitate not only North/South but also South/South cooperation between schools of Library and Information Science. The invited institutions represented all regions of the world and it was anticipated that if the concept were accepted then participants would offer specific suggestions on priorities on how the schools could cooperate as well as on practical modalities of implementation.

3. Mr. Courrier presented the Draft Directory which had been compiled from questionnaires circulated by UNESCO. This directory provided data on faculty, research interests, etc. on the institutions invited to participate in the workshop.

   It was agreed that the meeting would be conducted in an informal manner with Mr. Courrier as chairman. Ms. Ferguson agreed to serve as rapporteur.

   The agenda appears as Appendix 2. In response to an intervention by Mr. Wilson Aiyepeku, Mr. Courrier pointed out that with the approval of the 28 C/5, the SLISNET project had been fully approved for 1996-1997 and is expected to be supported throughout the six years period covered by the Medium-Term Strategy (28 C/4).

   Participants introduced themselves and offered brief background information on their institutions.

4. A general discussion of the SLISNET project description then ensued and the following points were noted:

- The proposed network was not intended to replace bilateral agreements but to help initiate such agreements.

- It would be a voluntary cooperative effort whereby resources and experiences could be shared.

- UNESCO's role as the coordinating focal point of the proposed network should be as transparent as possible. It should serve as a facilitator by getting things started and by securing seed money for initiating operations. Other sources would have to be explored for funding.

5. In February 1994, FID, ICA and IFLA had been consulted on the project and indicated their support. Other institutions had expressed interest in the proposal and were awaiting the outcome of the workshop.

SLISNET should not only facilitate improved communication between the members of the network but also with other networks in order to expand the boundaries of the institutional environments of participating members.

Emphasis should be placed on the benefits to be gained by institutions through participation in SLISNET if the support of university administrators is to be attracted.

6. Although UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy (1996-2001) for the next 6 years does not mention SLISNET explicitly, indications are that there is, within UNESCO, very high interest in developments in information technologies, the Information Superhighways, and their possible impact on education, science, culture and communication. In this context, the attention of the participants was drawn to resolution 28 C/VII.15 adopted by UNESCO General Conference at its 28th session and related to the development of new information technologies and their consequences in the fields of competence of the organization. In the view of the participants, the SLISNET project falls within the scope of this resolution and could be considered as one of the project referred to in section (d) of its operative paragraph (see Appendix 3).

7. The SLISNET project description was approved with amendments (Sections 1 to 4.3) and an action plan was incorporated (Section 4.4 and 4.5). The document as a whole appears in Appendix 4. The experts recommended that the project should be supported by UNESCO for at least six years, with an interim evaluation after three years and an overall evaluation after six years.

8. In considering activities for SLISNET, the following were identified for its long term programme and therefore not incorporated in the action plan.

   a. Preparation of guidelines for curriculum development for distance education courses.

   b. Evaluation and supervision of doctoral students and master's research papers defense of proposals or dissertations.

9. Other sources of funding should be explored for the implementation of the network, under multilateral and bilateral assistance as well as from foundations and private companies. The International Development Research Center (IDRC) identified some of the activities of the SLISNET project which appears in its current information policy research programme and for which collaboration with SLISNET could be envisaged. The following agencies and/or private companies were suggested in this respect: Council on library resources, Agency for International Development (A.I.D), World Bank (InfoDev), Banque internationale d'information sur les états francophones (BIEF), Agence de coope´ration culturelle et technique (ACCT), Deutsche Stiftung für International Entwicklung (DSE), Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), The Organization of American State (OAS), Regional Development Banks, Rockefeller Foundation, The Kellogg Foundation, commercial firms, such as Microsoft, telecommunication companies and also publishers.

10. During the closing session, participants expressed the hope that the project would achieve its objectives and become a meaningful network for the benefit of library and information sciences educational institutions globally. Then participants recorded their gratitude to Dean Toni Carbo-Bearman and the staff of the School of Library and Information Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh for the excellent support provided in the organization and conduct of the meeting. After thanking the participants for their cooperation and full participations in the deliberations, Y. Courrier closed the meeting on Thursday 7 December 1995 at 12:45 p.m.

University of Pittsburgh
School of Library and Information Science

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SLISNET WORKSHOP
December 4 - 7, 1995

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December 4 1995

School of Library and Information Science
University of Pittsburgh
December 4 - 7, 1995

Workshop on the Establishment of an International Network of Schools of Library and Information Sciences (SLISNET)

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting

2. SLISNET. Discussion of the Concept paper

   - The network and its members
   - Modalities of cooperation

3. SLISNET. Activities

   - Priorities
   - Activities

4. Adoption of the Final Report

5. Closure of the meeting

I:\theresa\unesco\agenda

15 NOUVELLES TECHNOLOGIES DE L'INFORMATION ET DE LA COMMUNICATION (1)

The General Conference,

Having examined the 28 C/4 and 28 C/5 documents,

Considering the significance of the paragraphs relating to the problems and challenges of the twenty-first century, and in particular the references contained therein to the new information and communication technologies.

Desirous however that this major issue should be presented in a uniform manner in the 28 C/4 document,

Stressing the importance of the societal problems posed by these new technologies, which relate both to the isolation of individuals and to the threats to the maintenance of cultural and linguistic diversity and the widening of the gaps between the industrialized and the developing countries,

(1) Résolution adoptée à la 18e séance plénière, le 13 novembre 1995

Mindful that the report of the CII Working Group on the Medium-Term Strategy of UNESCO (1996-2001) makes very critical observations in paragraph 9 about the potential dangers of an 'information superhighway' to developing nations,

Stressing further the potential inherent in such technologies for the development of educational methods, the flow of data and the expansion of intercultural exchanges,

Recalling that the intellectual and ethical mission of UNESCO concerns all its fields of competence,

Bearing in mind the recommendations of the Executive Board contained in documents 28 C/6 and 28 C/9, in particular paragraph 13 of document 28 C/9 and paragraph 64 of document 28 C/6,

Invites the Director-General:

(a) to ensure that in the final version of the Medium-Term Strategy 1996-2001 attention is drawn to the rapid development of the new communication technologies in such a way as to prompt interdisciplinary and intersectoral reflection of these technologies as a factor of development, and to revise the 28 C/5 document accordingly;

(b) to initiate in tandem therewith a wide-ranging discussion of the consequences of the development of such technologies for UNESCO's programmes in order to ensure that the Organization is able to anticipate and adapt to these changes for 1996-1997 on the basis of regional consultations;

(c) to promote a deontological approach which is in keeping with UNESCO's ethical mission and which is aimed at achieving harmonious development of these technologies while ensuring respect for linguistic and cultural pluralisms and the right to privacy;

(d) to take steps, beginning in the current biennium, to elaborate, together with the various partners concerned, specific and carefully monitored projects, in particular in the fields of distance education and virtual libraries.

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International network of
schools of library and information sciences

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND ACTION PLAN

1. CONTEXT

1.1 Human development is now among the major concerns of the international community, including the U.N. system and UNDP. UNESCO, for its part, is the only UN agency in charge of education and advocates that human beings are both the main agent of development and its final purpose.

The success of the UNITWIN/UNESCO chairs' programme, launched in 1992, suggests furthermore that international collaboration of institutions of higher education is now recognized as a privileged means to improve the development of human resources.

1.2 The UNESCO General Information programme's past action in the area of education of librarians and information specialists had two main foci: building up infrastructure, on one hand, and conceptual and methodological orientations, on the other. It is now possible to take advantage of those accomplishments, and to establish co-operative links with institutions throughout the world which have reached an appropriate level of self-reliance and academic and operational reliability. In addition, new telecommunication technologies make it possible to overcome geographical distances and, therefore, to establish more efficient working relations among dispersed institutions. As a result, the approved UNESCO Programme and Budget for 1996-97 includes a proposal for an international network of schools of library and information science which will be referred to as "SLISNET".

1.3. Two major resources - information and technology - are currently having a major impact on society, changing and reshaping the way people live. A depth of information, mediated through a complex range of technologies is now available, which is increasingly being utilized not only to transform our lives but also to affect and change the overall direction of industries, organizations and nations. This rapid explosion of the information sector and its global impact can be attributed to two principal causes:

Information Technology - which has not only led to greater efficiency and effectiveness in the processing of information, but more crucially in the context of this project proposal has dramatically improved linkages and connectivity,

removing geographical boundaries and making real the possibility of close collaborative alliances between geographically remote individuals and institutions.

The emerging Information Society - which is undergoing a traumatic change as the world in general moves rapidly towards the much heralded information revolution of the 21st century, which in the context of this project proposal, provides library and information science education institutions with a series of opportunities (new partners, markets and services) and a host of challenges (new competitors) which they need to respond to in an innovative and appropriate fashion.

It is from this understanding of the context in which Library and Information Science education institutions are operating that the concept and strategy of SLISNET have been conceived and developed.

2. PURPOSES

SLISNET has set as its mission and is dedicated to:

- establishing and developing a global electronic network of LIS education institutions with particular emphasis on South-South and North-South linkages, in order to facilitate a more efficient and effective response to the needs and demands of the changing information environment in which they operate.

- enhancing the teaching, learning, research, publishing and service capabilities of LIS education institutions, through bi-lateral and multi-lateral cooperative initiatives, in the context of a globally networked information environment.

- exploiting the collective expertise of LIS education institutions to provide an innovative response to the challenges and opportunities that are emerging in an increasingly complex and turbulent information environment.

3. ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 The project will consist of the establishment of a worldwide pilot electronic network of schools of library and information sciences. The institutions involved must offer recognized university level degrees. During the first phase of the pilot project, a limited number of institutions will be invited to participate in the network, ensuring a wide and balanced geographical representation. Other institutions willing to cooperate in the activities of the network will be included in the register of institutions so that they can contact or be contacted by other institutions in the register according to their profiles.

The network should thus establish North-South, as well as South-South links along the lines of the UNITWIN and the Technical Cooperation for Developing Countries (TCDC) concepts. Whenever appropriate, the creation of UNESCO Chairs will be proposed to the institutions belonging to the network.

3.2 UNESCO will serve as the coordinating focal point for the network. This includes the following:

- organization at regular intervals (e.g. every two years) of a monitoring, review and planning meeting of cooperating institutions;
- establishment and maintenance of a website of cooperating institutions;
- dissemination of information about SLISNET via the PGI Newsletter and electronic media;
- initial funding, whenever appropriate, of activities launched among cooperating institutions;
- fund raising
- etc.

3.3 Institutions invited to participate in the pilot project will confirm their acceptance by notifying UNESCO in writing. This acceptance entails the following:

- expressing agreement with the SLISNET project description
- designating a contact person who will serve as a focal point for SLISNET
- providing data for the register and updating at least once a year (see the form in Appendix 6)
- responding promptly to all requests for cooperation received from institutions registered
- making proposals for activities to be developed in cooperation with institutions registered
- implementing activities identified specifically for the pilot project

Within each institution the focal point will be responsible to ensure communication between members of the network. Once communication is established on a given project, the persons involved in the activities will directly communicate with each other.

3.4 The network is originally and conceptually global in scope, but appropriate co-operative mechanisms will be established with regional networks where and when they exist (e.g. Consortium of African Schools of Information Science (CASIS), Regional Programme for Strengthening Co-operation among National Information Systems and Networks for Latin America and the Carribean (INFOLAC), Regional Network for the Exchange of Information and Experience in Science and Technology in Asia and the Pacific (ASTINFO), Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE), European Association for Library and Information Education and Research (EUCLID), and Association internationale des écoles des sciences de l'information (AIESI) to implement the activities of SLISNET. Links with ORBICOM and other relevant and interdisciplinary networks will be established for joint activities relating to information and communication technologies.

4. ACTIVITIES

4.1 Educational institutions belonging to the network will co-operate in implementing educational activities such as: organization of courses, production, dissemination and use of educational material, preparation and/or revision of curricula, etc. Those educational activities will be prepared both for information specialists and information users, and will aim at formal (initial) and continuing education. The co-operation on each activity will be set on a voluntary basis among two or more institutions.

4.2 Educational institutions will cooperate in research activities such as joint research and development projects, dissemination of research results and in discussion groups on specific research issues.

4.3 Although UNESCO will serve as the coordinating focal point for the network, the initiative of educational, research and services activities will be shared by participating institutions and UNESCO. In order to exchange information, data, experience and educational material, members of the network will use various communication means including telecommunication technologies such as electronic interconnection.

4.4 More specifically, the following actions will be carried out as a matter of priority during the pilot project.

4.4.1 Establishment of a website at UNESCO that will include a profile of SLISNET participating institutions using the guidelines prepared in order to reflect their activities under two categories of functions (core and support) as follows:

I. Core Functions

a. Teaching/Learning
b. Research, Publishing, Consultancy and Advisory Services
c. Conferences and Workshops

II. Support Functions

a. Information Technology Resources
b. Information Resources
c. Faculty & Students

Time frame for the establishment of the website: six month

4.4.2 In keeping with the core functions the following activities were identified to be implemented within the SLISNET pilot project:

a. Teaching and Learning Functions

4.4.2.1 Offering a Distance Education course for SLISNET members about the Internet using the Internet.

Implementing institutions:

The Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen;
Ian Johnson, Coordinator and
Ecole de Bibliotheconomie & des sciences de l'information, Montréal;
Dr. M.G. Deschatelets, Coordinator
Time frame: 1 year

4.4.2.2 Developing an inventory of distance education programmes in library and information science

Implementing institution: Department of Library Studies, Kingston
Stephney Ferguson, Coordinator
Time frame: 1 year

b. Research, Publishing, Consultancy and Advisory Functions

4.4.2.3 Identifying potential information related research and development opportunities through interface with other networks.

Implementing institution: Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Sciences de l'Information et des Bibliothèques, Lyon

4.4.2.4 Initiating the development of an appropriate response from SLISNET participant, to the needs and demands identified in the external environment through the establishment of research projects, consultancy, and publications.

Implementing institution: Ecole Nationale Supe´rieure des Sciences de l'Information et des Bibliothèques, Lyon
Françoise Lerouge and F. Dupuigrenet, Coordinators
Time frame: 3 years and on going

4.4.2.5 Collaborating and participating in a shared research project leading to the publication of a collection of case studies on the theme of the impact of information technology on society.

Implementing institution: Department of Library and Information Studies, Gaborone
Richard Neill, Coordinator
Time frame: 2 years - case studies due end of 1996

4.4.2.6 Conducting feasibility study on the concept of the virtual library as a basis of a pilot project to be implemented by 4 schools (2 from developed and 2 from developing countries)

UNESCO, Coordinator
Time frame for feasibility study: 6 months

c. Conferences and Workshops

4.4.2.7 Initiating, co-ordinating and disseminating information about the following categories of conferences and workshops: those participants using SLISNET, those organized by participants (either individually or collaboratively) in their institutions; and other addressed to the general public, more particularly on topics of particular relevance to SLISNET (e.g applications of information technologies).

SLISNET will be used to plan electronically, facilitate interaction among students, conduct and publicize workshops, disseminate results and evaluate impact.

Implementing institution: Royal School of Librarianship, Copenhague
Ole Harbo, Coordinator
Time frame: 1 year on going

4.5 Support Functions

a. Information technology resources

4.5.1. 1. On the basis of minimum connectivity requirements which appear in Appendix 5 (second level) SLISNET members will assess institutional situation and within two months communicate their needs to UNESCO.

2. Provide information technology support to schools/departments where necessary to ensure minimal level connectivity as specified in the guidelines of Appendix 4.

Funding for items 1 and 2: UNESCO and other sources to be identified.
Time frame: 2 years.

3. Encourage participation of deans/directors, etc... in development of I/T policy within their parent institution and nationally using SLISNET to share information.

b. Information ressources

4.5.2 In addition to the basic requirements indicated above, the following activities also need to be included:

1. Identifying and compiling a list of Library and Information Sciences information resources available in electronic form.

Implementing institution: Documentation Research and Training Center, Bangalore
Time frame: 1 year.

2. Sharing teaching/classroom materials in electronic form.

Implementing institutions: all participants;
Time frame: on going.

3. Identifying and contacting producers, vendors and potential donors about teaching materials which are freely available.

Implementing institution: Ecole de Bibliothéconomie et des Sciences de l'Information, Montreal, and the Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen.
Time frame: 1 year.

4. Developing a proposal for funding a feasibility study for the establishment of a full text CD Rom Journal Services in LIS; carrying out the feasibility study; and submitting proposal to donor to distribute the CD Service (and related equipment if necessary) to SLISNET participants and other schools of LIS.

Implementing institution: The Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen.
Time frame: 18 months.

c. Faculty and Students

4.5.3 SLISNET should be used as a catalyst for the activities listed below:

a. in relation to teaching staff

1. Facilitating teaching staff exchanges (e.g Fullbright, visiting lecturers, etc.);
2. Renew knowledge and expertise of teaching staff using SLISNET;
3. Assisting with peer review process (eg.journal articles).

b. in relation to students

1. Facilitating exchange of students for study, fieldwork, etc.;
2. Sharing information about support for student and teaching staff.

5. SLIS MONITORING AND EVALUATION MECHANISMS

A Steering committee will be established by UNESCO which will be entrusted with the following functions: coordination, fund-raising, dissemination of information about SLISNET, progress evaluation.

E-mail and conferencing facilities willbe used to continue collective development and implementation of SLISNET activities.

A SLISNET listserve will be established (Implementing institution: Comenius University, Bratislava).

Appendix 5

SLISNET

Requirements of level of connectivity

a) First level: one microcomputer, Pentium microprocessor, 16 Mb of RAM, HD of 850 Mb, SVGA color monitor with 2 Mb of cache memory, CD-ROM driver quad speed, 2 disk drivers (3 1/2 and 5 in. diskettes), 28.000 bauds modem plus one ink-jet printer.

used for: E-mail, FTP, Gopher, Telnet and discussion list.

Cost: US $ 3,000 appprox.

b) Second level: one Unix-like workstation, Pentium microprocessor, 32 Mb of RAM, HD of 1.4 Gigabytes, CD-ROM driver quad speed, modem 64.000 bauds, SVGA color monitor with 2 Mb of cache memory, multimedia kit, plus one ink-jet printer.

used for: Web site and all other Internet services.

Cost: US $ 8,000 approx.

Considering the very rapid developments taking place in this area, the fairly reasonable costs involved and the free availability of the necessary software, participants considered that the second level was the minimal requirement in all cases, provided that appropriate telecommunication facilities are available (64 K bauds at a rate of 10 Mb/s).

Appendix 6

SLISNET PARTICIPATION FORM

A. Institutional information:

1. Name of institution

2. Full address:

3. Telephone No.:

4. Fax No.:

5. E-mail:

6 Homepage address (URL):

7. Level of connectivity to Internet (tick appropriate line)

-- a. Full time connectivity for all staff

-- b. Part time connectivity for all staff

-- c. Part time connectivity for some staff

-- d. Part time connectivity outside the institution

-- e. no connection

8. Staff statistics:

Teaching staff full time:

Teaching staff part time:

Non teaching staff:

9. Students statistics:

No.:

10. Programmes:

a.
b.
Continuing education

11. Laboratory facilities

a. Library:

b. Computer labs:

c. Audiovisual labs:

d. Special facilities:

B. SLISNET INFORMATION

12. SLISNET focal point and contact person:

Name:

Telephone no.:

Fax no.:

E-mail:

Homepage:

C. Individual Staff information

13. Academic and senior staff of the institute:

a) Name:

Position:

Teaching area*:

Research area*:

E-mail:

Homepage:

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* Teaching and research areas to be described by individual concerned without prescribed format

b) Name:

Position:

Teaching area*:

Research area*:

E-mail:

Homepage:

c) Name:

Position:

Teaching area*:

Research area*:

E-mail:

Homepage:

d) Name:

Position:

Teaching area*:

Research area*:

E-mail:

Homepage

(Use additional copies if necessary)

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* Teaching and research areas to be described by individual concerned without prescribed format.